The Belief.

I Believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth; and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was Conceived by the Holy-Ghost, Born of the Virgin *Mary*, suffered under *Pontius Pilate*, was Crucified, Dead and Buried; He Descended into Hell; the third day he arose again from the Dead, He Ascended into Heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty; and from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy-Ghost, the Holy Catholick-Church, the Communion of Saints, the Forgiveness of Sins, the Resurrection of the Body, and the Life Everlasting. *Amen.*

Preparation

FOR

DEATH.

BEING

A Letter sent to a Young Gentlewoman in *France*, in a dangerous Distemper, of which She died.

By *WILLIAM WAKE*, M. A.

The Fifth Edition.

Numb. xxiii. 10.

Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my latter end be like his.

LONDON,

Printed for Richard Chiswell, at the *Rose* and *Crown*, in St. *Paul's* Church-Yard. MDCLXXXIX.

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Advertiſement.

COuld either my deſires, or endeavours have prevailed for the ſuppreſſing of the following *Letter*, it had been buried in the ſame Grave with Her to whom it was addreſs'd. But being fallen into the Hands of her Relations after her Death, many *Copies* were diſperſed before my return into *England*, and thereby a neceſſity put upon me either to publiſh it my ſelf, or to have the diſſatisfaction of ſeeing others do it for me.

This being the true account of the *Edition* of this ſhort Treatiſe, I

ſhall need the leſs Apology, if there ſeem nothing in it for which it ſhould be expoſed to a publick view. It was writ as a private Letter, to a perſon of more Piety, than Curioſity; and without any proſpect; nay, I may add more, upon an aſſurance that it ſhould never come to any ones ſight but her own. And therefore it ought not to be wonder'd if it appear with all the plainneſs and freedom, which an *Epiſtolary* Stile and Character required. For the reſt, as I can ſincerely profeſs that it was no principle of vanity that led me firſt to write it, ſo much leſs does any ſuch Motive induce me now to publiſh it. It was to ſerve a greater and better end, I both then did, and now

do

do deſign it: And if thoſe who ſhall hereafter peruſe it, do it but with the ſame Piety that ſhe did for whom it was compoſed, I am perſwaded neither they nor I ſhall have any cauſe to repent us of our Labour.

Paris, April 25. S. N. 1684.

Madam,

THE Addreſs *I here make you, how meanly ſoever I have performed it, is yet ſo ſuitable to your circumſtances, and ſo well befits my character, that I make no doubt but you will accept it with the ſame charity that I have deſigned it. And therefore inſtead of making* Apologies *for my undertaking, I will rather ſend it to you with my hearty Prayers, That thoſe few Directions I have here put together, may be as truly uſeful to you, as I do aſſure you they were really by me intended for your ſervice.*

You are not, Madam, *to expect in this ſhort draught any thing but*

what you have often already heard, and, I perſwade my ſelf, have long practiſed. Religion *is none of thoſe things that* change with the faſhion, *and accommodate themſelves to the* mode: *And though we have of late met with ſome who have endeavoured upon the foundations of* Chriſtianity *to erect a new Scheme of* Court-Divinity, *by making the way to Heaven both broader and ſmoother than it is: yet both the projectors and thoſe that follow them will ſadly find themſelves miſtaken in the end; when the one ſhall periſh for betraying their Maſter, and the others be condemn'd for not rejecting their Innovations.*

But, Madam, *if you find nothing new in the* matter, *I am ſure much leſs will you have any thing in the* Stile *and* Method, *but what is plain and eaſie.*

In

In such Discourses as these, he seems to speak most properly, that expresses himself most clearly. Some things indeed I should have added; others have changed, and have dress'd the whole with greater care; but I had little time, and much other business, which I am sure you know to be more than pretence. *The Rules yet I am confident are sound and useful, and may as they are, serve your devotion; But if your abundance of better helps frustrate that design, yet at least you will be pleased to esteem it an undoubted testimony of that sincerity with which I am,*

Madam,

Your most humble,

and most obedient

Servant,

W. W.

IN-

INTRODUCTION.

THERE is noth'ng hath proved more fatal to that due *Preparation* we ought to make for *another Life*, than our unhappy miſtake of the nature of *this*. We are brought into the World, Children, Ignorant and Impotent; we grow up in Vanity and Folly; and when we come to be Men, we are but very little more prudent and more conſiderate. The whole of our *Reflections* ſeems to terminate in this, what courſe we are to take to paſs our time; ſome to get, others to ſpend their Eſtates: and when Intereſt or Inclination, Friends or Fortune have determined the choice, we are then entred in, and our remaining buſineſs is to purſue this end to the beſt advantage, for our preſent eaſe and our future eſtabliſhment. Thus are our thoughts and our deſires wholly tied to this World; we vainly project a ſettlement in it, nor look we any farther than the little Intereſts and Employments thereof engage us.

I AM ſure, *Madam*, I need not ſay much to convince you, who have had ſo many Opportunities to ſettle this *Reflection* upon your own Experience, and who, I am perſwaded,

perſwaded, have ſo profitably employ'd them, that this is the juſt Character of the far greater part of Mankind: And for the unhappy influence of it to the *Decay* of *Chriſtianity*, I think it is not to be doubted, that 'tis the tying of our Affections ſo much to this World, that above any thing indiſpoſes us to think of another. Whileſt we ſet up our Hopes and our Eſtabliſhment here, we either altogether forget, or at leaſt do not ſo vigorouſly conſider, That God has provided another and better place for us, whither we ſhall in a very little time be transferred by him, and for which therefore the great affair of our whole lives now ſhould be to provide.

3. Is it poſſible to be imagined that we ſhould ſee ſuch numbers engage their Lives and Labours, ſome to heap together *a little dirt* that ſhall bury them in the end; Others to gain an *Honour*, that at beſt can be celebrated but by an inconſiderable part of the World, and is envied and calumniated by more than 'tis truly given: Moſt to purſue the Pleaſures (as they call them) of their Natures; which begin in Sin, are carried on with Danger, and end in bitterneſs; and ſcarce one that troubles himſelf about the Bleſſings of *Heaven*, or at leaſt lives as if he did ſo. Would Men ſeriouſly perſwade themſelves that they have here *no abiding place, no City to dwell in:* but are only in their paſſage

to

to the heavenly *Jeruſalem*, their *City which is above*, where alone true happineſs is to be found, and upon which therefore their thoughts and their endeavours ought chiefly to be employed.

4. CAN we behold the Vices and Debaucheries of many; the careleſsneſs and irreligion of almoſt all; and believe that the *Chriſtian World* is ſeriouſly convinced of thoſe great Truths their Religion teaches them of *A future life*, and *A vaſt Eternity* of Rewards and Puniſhments, according as we obſerve or neglect the Duties it commands in *This*?

5. How ſhall we believe that thoſe Men are perſwaded of the true buſineſs of this Life, That 'tis the time of tryal, That God has thrown us into this World, as into a Circle, to exerciſe our ſelves in it, and receive the *Crown*, if we come off with Victory; who ſo ſhamefully decline the *Combat*; and are ſo far from obtaining the Victory, that we are ſcarcely to be brought but even to do any thing towards it?

6. IN a word; were it poſſible that the thoughts of *Eternity*, but eſpecially the near approaches of it, by a mature Age, a craſie Conſtitution, or a violent Sickneſs, ſhould amaze ſo many as we find it does, make them ſo unwilling to go to Chriſt, and receive the *Reward of their Labours*; had they ever truly conſidered all theſe things, and not rather with old *Simeon* ſing their *Nunc dimittis*, with

with comfort and aſſurance; and cry out with St. *Paul*, Phil. 1. 21. *To me to live is Chriſt, and to die is gain*; and again, v. 23. *I have a deſire to depart, and to be with Chriſt.* Luk. 2. 29. Phil. 1. 21, 23.

7. WERE I now, *Madam*, to deal with any other than your ſelf, theſe and the like Conſiderations would engage me, before I entred on the following Preſcriptions, to diſpoſe your mind to a Reception of them, by ſhewing you the great intereſt we have in *Eternity*; That our Lives are uncertain, to be ſure cannot be long here, and that therefore we ought to haſten all we can, before it be too late, to examine our Souls, and provide for Futurity. That all the little Objects we now purſue, for which our Eaſe, our Conſcience, nay, our very Religion it ſelf is ſacrificed by us, are but Vanities and Trifles, neither worthy in themſelves, nor ſatisfying in their enjoyment. But, *Madam*, your Virtue, and your Prudence, make all ſuch Preparations unneceſſary Formalities, and inſtead of opening the way to the following *Addreſs* by ſuch Inſinuations, I ought rather to Apologize for my Indiſcretion in the whole undertaking, which your Piety prevents, and which your daily Practice ſhews you already to underſtand beyond any thing I am able to offer for your aſſiſtance.

8. NE-

8. NEVERTHELESS since it hath pleased God to an excellent natural disposition to add yet other Obligations, and by the troubles of this Life to draw you to himself; to shew you worthy of his favour, and, I trust, more highly to reward you in the next; be pleased to give me leave this way to congratulate with you those Evils, which so many are wont to lament, and which no one more sincerely wishes (if it please God) to see you free from, than my self; and as you have done me the honour to command my attendance whilst you were with us here, pardon me if I intrude upon your Meditations a few of my most serious *Reflections*, to supply my absence; and be a Testimony of that real Respect wherewith I honour you now in your Retirement.

CHAP.

CHAP. I.

Of Contentedneſs under your Condition.

THô I am infinitely diſtant from that excellent perfection which made the *Primitive Chriſtians glory in their tribulations*, and St. *Paul* rejoyce in that *ſting in the fleſh* which God had given him as a peculiar Bleſſing from above; yet is it really ſome ſatisfaction to me, that I am not now wholly liable to that Cenſure, which is ſo uſually made on theſe occaſions, *That 'tis eaſie for any Man when he is well, to give advice to them that are not.* It hath pleaſed God, for the raſhneſs perhaps of my uſual diſcourſe, to make it at preſent very uneaſie for me to ſpeak at all. I cannot but acknowledge his Mercy in the Admonition, and if it pleaſe him altogether to ſilence me, ſo, That I ſhall not only, as now, ſpeak with difficulty, but wholly be diſabled to open my Mouth, to any articulate utterance; yet I hope he will give me grace even in my *thoughts* to praiſe him; To conſider the juſtice of his proceeding with me, and to implore his pardon of what my ſins have worthily deſerved.

2. It cannot be deny'd, but that this is an Exercise of the most difficult Nature; and the Apostle himself confesses even where he most exhorts us to an acquiescence in it, *That no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous*: Yet Considerations there are that are able to alleviate our greatest miseries, and make us, if not come up to the character of those who *rejoyce in Tribulations*, yet at least satisfie the duty I am now recommending, of being *patient* and *contented* under our *Sufferings*.

Heb. 12. v. 11.

3. And the first of these both in our practice and this Discourse ought to be, *To look up to that Hand that inflicts them*.

It is our great unhappiness when any calamities fall upon us, that we are uneasie and dissatisfied; and our whole business and project is, how to remove them, not to consider from whence they come. Sometimes indeed, if the cause be visible, we discourse of it as of a *chance* or a *misfortune*, but we stop at the instrument, and never pass on to him that directed it; the second cause we know, but trouble our selves no further to recurr to the first: whereas, would we seriously consider, * That the *Providence of God orders all the affairs of the World*; * That *without his assistance we can no more get quit of our Affliction, than but by his permission we first fell into it*; * That *this unquietness therefore is a mur-*

murmuring againſt his Juſtice, a rebellion againſt his Providence, upon whom alone we ought to rely; and *whoſe mercy we ſhould by all imaginable ſubmiſſion implore*; We ſhould then acquieſce in his diſpenſation, till it pleaſed his goodneſs to remove our evils; cry out with old *Eli*, *It is the Lord, let him do what ſeemeth him good*: and as we daily pray that *his will may be done in Earth*, ſo by our ſubmiſſion ſhew that we truly deſire it. 1 Sam. 3. 18.

4. Let us to this add, *Secondly*; That *God delights not to afflict, nor ever willingly grieve the Children of Men.*

*It may be we ſuffer in our calamity the puniſhment of our ſins, and then let us not murmur at that which is the juſt reward of our deſervings. *Perhaps God proves us in this life, that he may the more plenteouſly reward us in the next; and how then ſhall we repine againſt his mercy, which makes theſe *light afflictions that are but for a moment, work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*; To be ſure if we make that uſe of them which he intends, if we repent ſeriouſly, ſubmit contentedly, and ſerve him faithfully, they ſhall turn to our advantage: thô the paſſage be troubleſome, yet is it ſecure, and ſhall in a little 2 Cor. 4. 17.

time bring us eaſe and quiet, and peace at the laſt.

5. FOR let us not miſtake the goodneſs of God, nor imagine that becauſe he ſmites us, therefore we are forſaken by him, but let us conſider rather,

Thirdly; 'That 'tis the very Condition of all 'his promiſes, through much Tribulation to 'bring us to his Kingdom;

'That bleſſed place where all evils ſhall be 'removed, and *there ſhall be no* Revel. 21. 4. '*more any death, nor ſorrow, nor* '*crying, nor pain.* We have a full account of this, *Heb.* 12. a place ſo ſatisfactory, that I will tranſcribe only one paſſage, to engage you to recurr your ſelf to the reſt; *My Son deſpiſe not thou* v. 5, 6. *the chaſtening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him; for whom the Lord loveth he chaſteneth, and ſcourgeth every Son whom he receiveth.* But, *Fourthly*;

6. '*Let us look into the Ages that have gone* '*before us*;

LET us conſult our own experience in the preſent; we ſhall find the obſervation of our *Apoſtle* ever to have been verified, That the beſt Men generally fall under the ſevereſt

severest pressures; Our Saviour *Christ* was our forerunner in this tryal, as well as in the reward that accompanies it: He began as we ought to follow after, and *for the joy which was set before him endured the Cross, despising the shame.* Heb. 12. 2. Which of his holy Apostles escaped this tryal? What numbers of the Primitive Saints were under the perpetual persecution of the most malicious Enemies that Hell could raise against them, for many hundred Years? '*They were stoned; they were* '*sawn asunder, were slain with the* '*Sword, they wandred up and* Heb. 11. 17. '*down in Sheeps skins and Goats* '*skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented*; and 'yet were these the Men, *of* '*whom the World was not worthy,* ——— 38. 'whom we ought with comfort to look up unto, *and run* Heb. 12. 1. *with patience the race that is set before us.*

7. These Considerations, thô I have (as I ought) proposed in general terms, yet I am sure, *Madam*, you will not fail by a particular application to bring them home to your own concerns; and for your easier performance I will go on, if you please, to make yet a reflection or two that may fortifie you in it.

8. In enquiring into the Goods that you have lost, or the Evils you either fear or

ſuffer; I ſhall not trouble you with an Enumeration of that which I know you deſpiſe, the *flatteries*, the *courtſhip*, the other *vanities* of the World; The very loſs of theſe is a happineſs almoſt equal to what you undergo for it: And though that Beauty, which yet others, I perſwade my ſelf, valued too more highly than your ſelf, was a Bleſſing which you owed much to Heaven for; yet the additional ornaments you have hereby the opportunity of making to your Soul, will in the end give you a more ſolid ſatisfaction, and as much chain to you the affections of the good and wiſe, as the other attracted the eyes of the reſt.

9. For your preſent diſtemper; it is, God be thanked, neither ſo troubleſome for the preſent, as to take you off from all ſatisfaction; nor, I am willing to perſuade my ſelf, ſhall it prove ſo dangerous in its conſequence, as to deprive you of all hope of ſeeing your ſelf again in your former health, only diſciplined and inſtructed, not utterly cut off by ſickneſs.

10. However, let us ſuppoſe now, as well as fear the worſt; Is there any thing particular in dying young? Do not thouſands every day do it? And have you known none in health and vigour, who have pitied your condition, and behold they are themſelves gone before you, even ſince you fell into this Diſtemper? And what is the harm then

then of this? that you have fairer warning than others, who are unexpectedly cut off, and so have a better opportunity, as well as greater engagements, to cultivate your Soul, and provide for your latter end? To dye is no pain; to leave this World is only to get quit of a troublesome place, where you could never find any ease or quiet, any solid satisfaction and comfort. To go to Heaven is to be transferr'd to that Kingdom you have ever long'd for; to enjoy all the glories of eternity, to become company for Saints and Angels, and behold the Blessed presence of God, *in whose presence there is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore.*

11. The truth is, the greatest part of your misfortunes is founded on the opinion of the World: we fools esteem these things evils, and this makes others believe they really are so. But the good Christian who considers them only as necessary passages to *a glorious immortality*; that through this dark *Scene* of fansied horror sees a *Crown* and a *Throne*, and *everlasting blessings* prepared for him; joyfully receives his Summons as he has long impatiently expected it: goes off out of the World as contentedly, as the *Actor* when the Play is ended leaves the *Stage*. His only concern is, whilst he appears upon it, so to demean himself, that he may have a *Plaudite* at last; and then 'tis all one whether

ther his part ended in the *Third Act*, or continues on to the very laſt *Scene*.

12. Such, *Madam*, are your Obligations to this firſt Duty, and the performance of them will eſpecially engage you to theſe three things;

1. *Never deſpair either of God's bleſſing here, or of his reward hereafter*; but go on as you have begun; fulfil your duty as he has commanded; embrace his promiſes with Faith and aſſurance; and for the reſt, leave it in his hands, as in the hands of a moſt merciful Saviour, who himſelf became Man, and ſuffer'd Death upon the Croſs for our ſakes, and by that ſtupendious act of Mercy, has taught us ever to rely in all things upon his Goodneſs.

2. *Murmur not at your ſickneſs*, for thereby you will ſin againſt God's Providence and Government; but ſubmit with Peace to what you ſuffer, and pray for your deliverance. I do not ſay you ſhould affect a rude inſenſibility: Sighs and Groans and mournful expreſſions, theſe are the ſick Man's proper language; David *roared for* Pſal. 38. 8. *the diſquietneſs of his Soul*; our bleſſed Lord himſelf in his laſt and Matthew. xxvii. 46. ſharpeſt pang of ſorrow, *cryed out with a loud voice*, before *he gave up the Ghoſt*. There is nothing in this but what is innocent; and though too much of it may betray your weakneſs, yet whilſt

whilſt you keep ſtill a reſignation to God's diſpoſal, it cannot be imputed to you for any ſin.

3. TAKE heed of that, which is the general fault of ſick perſons, and which a long diſorder almoſt unavoidably brings with it, and that is *Peeviſhneſs*. This will but render you uneaſie to your ſelf, and to thoſe about you; it troubles your repoſe, without doing you any good; and is equally to be avoided both for the folly, and for the ſin.

13. I SHALL cloſe this reflection with one neceſſary Remark, which I deſire you to apply to all the following; That in ſpeaking thus to you, I am ſo far from charging you as guilty in this matter, that I can ſincerely ſay, I believe the exhortation wholly needleſs; only it was my duty in ſo important a concern to omit nothing that might any way be thought neceſſary: and it will be your ſatisfaction to ſee how far you are advanced in your duty; and your engagement to purſue that very little, which you may perhaps find to be ſtill wanting.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

That you ought not to be amazed at the Fear of Death.

THERE is nothing in the World more generally dreaded, and yet leſs to be feared than *Death*. Indeed for thoſe unhappy Men, whoſe hopes terminate in this life, no wonder if the proſpect of another ſeems terrible and amazing. Hell is a place which the moſt reſolute Soul cannot but tremble to think of, how much more to enter into? But for him who has lived well, and who therefore relies on God's mercies for an *eternal Salvation*, to ſhew this concern, it betrays either much weakneſs or great doubt, and either his faith, or his hopes, or both, are leſs firm than they ought to be.

'HE therefore that will not *fear to die*, 'muſt *firſt* be careful *to live well*.

2. THE ſtroak of Death is nothing; Children endure it, and the greateſt Cowards find it no pain: But when to this we ſhall add the certain apprehenſion of its being the gate to an *eternal life*, then may we preſume to ſay, We have wholly conquer'd this *King of terrors*, and ſing the *Epinikion* of St. *Paul*,

1 Cor.

1 Cor. 15. *O death where is thy sting! O Grave, where is thy Victory!* ----v. 55.
Thanks be to God who giveth us the Victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. ----v. 57.

Secondly; He must *take off his affections from this World.*

3. It was the reflection of the Son of *Sirach*, *Ecclus* 4. 1. *O death, how bitter is the remembrance of thee to a Man that liveth at rest in his possessions, to the Man that hath nothing to vex him, but hath prosperity in all things!* Whilst we please our selves with the vanities we enjoy here, we cannot expect but that it must needs be a trouble to us to be divorced from them: But let us only change the *Scene*; instead of these earthly, transient goods, let us raise our Souls to the Heavenly and Eternal: then shall we begin to think the time long, that we are detained from them, and wish for that end, we before feared. *Tully* tells us, that *Cleombrotus* was so taken with this speculation, That having only read in *Plato* the conjectures of that great Man concerning the *state* of the *Soul after death*, he had not patience to tarry the tedious course of nature, but by a violent death cut the thread himself, that he might immediately enjoy what he so infinitely desired.

4. Nor may we fortifie our ſelves much leſs againſt the fear of death, *Thirdly*,

'From the Conſideration of *thoſe Evils it* '*frees us from*; than of that happineſs it 'transfers us to.

When the Great Emperour of *Perſia* wept over his Army upon this Conſideration, That within the revolution of a ſingle Age, not a Man of all that innumerable confluence would be left alive; *Artabanus* ſtanding by, improved his meditation; by adding, That yet all of them ſhould meet with ſo many and great evils, that every one ſhould wiſh himſelf dead long before that. It is the true character of our lives which *Job* once gave; *Man that is born of a Woman hath but a ſhort time to live, and is full of trouble.* It is the great bleſſing of Heaven that as our lives are very miſerable, ſo are they very ſhort too, and what we uſually complain of as our misfortune, we ought rather to congratulate as our happineſs. Had *David* died a little ſooner, How much trouble had he eſcaped which now he endured, in the rebellion and death of his own Son, and all the miſeries of a Civil War that was raiſed againſt him? Let any Man conſult his own experience, and ſay, how many ſorrows he had miſs'd, had God called him to his reſt but a few years before;

Job 14. 1.

fore; and therefore whether the promiſe he has made to *deliver the juſt from the evils to come*, ought not to be made our daily prayer for its accompliſhment, rather than fill our Souls with terror at the apprehenſion?

But *Fourthly*, '*Death do's not only free us* '*from miſery, but ſin too.*

5. The life of a Chriſtian is a continual warfare, full of dangerous conflicts and doubtful conſequences: Our luſts ſollicit us, the World encourages, the Devil tempts us; we fall often, and are never ſecure. But *Death* frees us from all danger, ſets us ſafely on Shore in our long-expected *Canaan*, where there are no temptations, no dangers, no poſſibility of falling; but eternal purity, and immortal joys ſecure our happineſs for evermore.

There is yet an advice which may uſefully be added here, and it is this,

'*That ſince the time of our dying is uncertain,* '*we ſhould every day expect what every hour* '*may bring to us:*

It is our great unhappineſs in this matter, that though we live never ſo many years, we are ſtill ſurprized. We *put the evil day far from us*, and then it catches us at unawares, and we tremble at the proſpect.

But let us ſtand on our guard, let us live like thoſe who expect to die, and then we ſhall find theſe terrors very much leſſen, and that we fear'd Death only becauſe we were unacquainted with it. *Philip* King of *Macedon* had a Page conſtantly attending in his Chamber to tell him every morning as ſoon as he awaked, '*Remember, O King, that thou* '*art mortal.*

7. But to quit you wholly of this fear, and that I may cloſe this point too with ſomething particular, give me leave, *Madam*, to deſire you inſtead of a thouſand arguments, to recur only to your own experience; you have already lookt death in the face, you are acquainted with it, what have you found ſo terrible in it as to diſturb the repoſe of a good Chriſtian, *i. e.* of ſuch a one as your ſelf? I cannot without ſatisfaction remember the calm, the quiet, the peace you were then in; when every hour ſeem'd to tell you 'twas your laſt. *Death* is an enemy you have already met, and already conquer'd, you have pull'd out his ſting, by the Preparation you have made for it, and you know he has nothing now remaining that can injure or affright you. Only maintain your conqueſt, by ſecuring your innocence, and working out your Salvation; and then you may with confidence undervalue that which ſo much terrifies the World, and which yet all, even thoſe who the moſt dread it, muſt in a little time meet whether they will or no.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

That you ought to be careful to provide for another World.

THIS is the great duty of our lives, and ought to be the chief buſineſs of us all every day of them. No man knows what the next hour may bring forth, and to put our Salvation, and the hopes of eternity to ſo dangerous a hazard as we do, when we procraſtinate (though never ſo little) our *working of it out with fear and trembling*, is to ſhew either a very unwarrantable preſumption upon God's goodneſs, or a very light eſteem of our own Souls.

2. OUR lives depend on ſo many curious parts and Organs, ſo many diſeaſes aſſail them every moment, ſo many accidents may take them from us, that we can never ſay the next minute is our own; and that he therefore who neglects his Salvation to day, may without danger put it off to to morrows conſideration. God has told us that his Spirit ſhall not alway ſtrive with Man, but as he offers to every one a ſpace to *repent*, ſo there is a time too (if we omit that opportunity) when there *ſhall be no longer any ſpace for it.*

AND how can any of us tell that this hour is not the laſt wherein God will give us

his grace for ſo great a work; ſo that though we ſhould live to ſee the next, yet that then our Sentence ſhall not be found already pronounced, and we ſhall not be able to repent, though we never ſo much deſire it.

3. Such obligations therefore have we all immediately to *conſider our ways; and turn our feet to God's teſtimonies:* But, *Madam*, it has pleaſed his great goodneſs to lay more than ordinary ties upon you, to do this: He has taken you off, by a peculiar inſtance of his Mercy, from the Vanities and Temptations of the World: He has diſabled you from falling into many ſins: and calls upon you to watch againſt the reſt, he has brought you to an early knowledge of your ſelf, and of him, at an age when moſt others are the Servants of ſin, and creatures of vanity. He has given you opportunity from the writings and converſation of the beſt Men, to underſtand your duty, your danger, and your intereſt: And, *Madam*, what you ought above all things to bleſs him for, he has given you a heart too, to receive inſtruction, and that is deſirous of his glory; and though after ſo many better means as you have had of informing your ſelf how to proceed in this important buſineſs; after the knowledge you have attain'd, and the progreſs you have made, there is little need for me to add any thing on this ſubject: yet I know I cannot

Pſal. 119. 59.

not better ſatisfie your piety, or diſcharge my own duty, than by laying before you, in a ſhort view, a proſpect of your labours, through which you have ſo long been travelling, and are now ſo nearly come, to everlatting life.

4. At the firſt *Creation*, when God created Man upon the Earth, he planted in him a Law teaching him his *whole Duty*, he gave him beſides, a *poſitive Law*, not to eat of the *fruit of the Tree of Knowledge*; and to perform this, he added a perfect ſtrength and ability whereby he might for ever have lived without the leaſt ſin; had *Adam* done this, his perfection (the *Knowledge* and *Ability* God created in him) had ſtill continued, and after a certain Period of years, which God ſhould have determined, he had been rewarded with an aſſumption to eternal felicity. Gen. 2. 17.

5. This is that which is uſually called THE FIRST COVENANT, which *Adam* fatally breaking by his diſobedience, ſoon forfeited; and came ſhort of that Glory, which God had prepared for him: yet it pleaſed the Lord to enter into a SECOND with him, the tenour of which was, That *the Seed of the Woman ſhould bruiſe the Serpent's head*: i. e. That *Chriſt* taking our nature upon him, and ſo becoming *the ſeed of the Woman*, ſhould perform that Covenant of *unſinning obedience* Gen. 3. 15.

which *Adam broke*, and yet being faultleſs, undergo a ſhameful, and ignominious death for him and his Poſterity; and ſo *bruiſe the Serpent's head*; i. e. deliver us from the power of the Devil, who by this tranſgreſſion had got the dominion over us.

6. And this is that *Covenant* we now live under, the *Promiſes* of which are * pardon of ſins through the Blood of Chriſt; * ſtrength and grace to perform the conditions, * and eternal glory to reward our labours; This is what *God* on his part has declared to us; For the requiſites on ours, what we muſt do to obtain theſe bleſſings, that is the great buſineſs of us all to know, and the peculiar deſign of this place briefly to conſider.

7. Where, firſt, I muſt lay down this for your encouragement, that we are no longer now tied to the heavy yoke of a perfect, unſinning Obedience; not to have committed any *deliberate* ſin, nay, or even to have perſiſted in a *habit* and *courſe* of it; but it is * a ſincere endeavour to perform whatſoever God enables us; * an unfeigned Obedience to the whole Goſpel of Chriſt: and * a hearty bewailing of our own infirmities, as often as we come ſhort of it, with * a real deſire, and * true endeavour of doing better for the future.

8. To enter on a minute conſideration of this would engage me to lay before you a

Summary

Summary of the whole Goſpel of Chriſt: But, *Madam*, this were to exceed the limits of my deſign, and you have abundant aſſiſtances, for this Knowledge, in thoſe excellent Books which you have choſen for the Companions of your Travels. Only becauſe certain it is that the very beſt of us come ſhort of our duty, and ſtand in need of God's pardon, and forgiveneſs; I will briefly lay before you the *method* you are to take to obtain this, in the particular conſideration of thoſe two great duties of *Faith* and *Repentance*.

SECT. I.

Of Faith.

THERE is ſcarce any duty which has been ſo obſcured in the writings of learned Men as this. I will not enter here into any of their diſputes, but briefly ſay, what I think fit for your practice and performance of it.

2. FAITH then is an *aſſenting to, or believing* * *the whole word of God, but eſpecially of his Goſpel, and of the* * Commands *and* * Threats *and* * Promiſes *therein contained.* This is the nature of that *Faith* which is required of us, and it is then perfect when it affords to every one of theſe that aſſent which is proportioned to it, viz. 1. A firm aſſent to whatever the Goſpel has revealed: 2. an obediential ſubmiſſi-

on

on to the Commands: 3. An humble fear and awe of the Threats: and 4. a fiducial reliance on the Promiſes of it.

3. To have the firſt of theſe you muſt in general firmly believe, That whatever God hath ſaid is infallibly true; and though in particular, there be many revelations which you cannot, it may be, underſtand the poſſibility of; as, That *God became Man, was born of a Mother ſtill remaining a Virgin*; *That he ſuffered and died, and yet lives for ever*; yet muſt you undoubtedly conclude, That ſince he has plainly told you theſe things are ſo, you ought firmly to believe him, ſeem they never ſo repugnant otherwiſe to your apprehenſion.

4. To have the *Second*, you muſt in general *aſſent* to God's *Commands*, that they are moſt fitting, juſt, and righteous; and that all Men therefore ought diligently to fulfil them; and in particular you muſt reſolve that by the aſſiſtance of Heaven you your ſelf will.

5. For the *Third* you muſt *believe* ſtedfaſtly that theſe *Threats* ſhall certainly, as moſt juſtly they ought, be executed upon all thoſe impenitent Sinners againſt whom they are denounced, and that except you take care to work out your Reconciliation, and get out of the number of theſe unhappy creatures, you ſhall certainly find your part in them.

6. For

6. For the *laſt* you are infallibly to *believe* what God has *promiſed*; eſpecially that he will *give pardon of ſin, and everlaſting Salvation to all humble and repenting ſinners*; and for what refers to your own particular, you are confidently to rely upon his word, that if you perform your part, Chriſt will never fail in his; and that therefore you ought to fulfil thoſe duties, which he commands, and to which alone this *Promiſe* of Reward is given.

7. It is a queſtion which my little experience lets me know do's oftentimes trouble very good Men, That certainly their *Faith* in this laſt inſtance is not right, becauſe they ſtill find it accompanied with *Fears and Doubts* of their own Salvation. But, *Madam*, you muſt conſider that the *Faith* which God requires in this matter is only this, *That he will certainly reward all thoſe that believe in him, and obey his Commandments*; This we are undoubtedly to aſſent to; but now for the particular application of this *Faith* to our ſelves, that deſerves no more of our aſſent, nor can indeed warrantably have it, than what is founded on the ſerious conſideration of our own performances. Now though our Conſcience bearing witneſs to our ſincerity, may give us great cauſe to *hope* we are in *a ſtate of Salvation*; yet is it no part of any Man's *Faith* undoubtedly to *believe* it: Nay, rather ſome degree of *fear* and *trembling*

bling mixt with it may be a good means to ſecure us in our duty; whilſt a confident dependance is very often ill grounded, and may create ſuch a negligence as will certainly ruine us.

8. Let your endeavour therefore be to fulfil God's commands, to repent as often as you fail of it, and to hope for pardon and acceptance of him. Infinite reaſon you have for all this; and this will be ſufficient for your preſent comfort, and for your future acceptance. But if ſtill, either * the greatneſs of the danger, or * glory of the reward; * either your deſires of becoming better, * or a true and humble ſenſe of your own unworthineſs (which is almoſt the perpetual caſe of the beſt perſons) keep your Soul under an awe and a concern, and will not ſuffer you to riſe up to that *confidence*, which ſome Men, I fear, unwarrantably themſelves pretend to, I am ſure unwarrantably require of others; Aſſure your ſelf, that whilſt you firmly acquieſce in the general belief, *That God will reward all them that love him, and doubt of* your ſelf only becauſe you *fear* whether you do this ſo well as you ought; this *doubting* ſhall prepare you to receive the reward of your *Humility*, but never bring you in danger of any puniſhment for your *infidelity*.

SECT.

SECT. II.

Of Repentance.

REPENTANCE is uſually defined to be *a change of mind, an abſolute entire converſion of our Souls from ſin to God.* It is not a thing to be done at certain times, as when we *give an Alms*, we exerciſe a particular *Act of Charity*; but 'tis a *ſtate of life*, and conſiſts in a continual ſincere practice of all thoſe duties which God has required, and a hearty ſorrow, confeſſion, and reſolution of better obedience, as often as we violate any of his Commands.

2. THE paſſage to it is difficult and uneaſie; It contains many ſteps which the habitual ſinner will find it hard to overpaſs. I ſhall here conſider only *four* of the more principal, and which are ever found in that Chriſtian who truly lives in a *ſtate* of it.

3. THE *firſt* is, *To have a true ſenſe of ſin, of its Odiouſneſs, and of its danger.*

i. e. You muſt firmly be convinced that every ſin you commit, ſets you at enmity with Heaven, and will (if not forſaken) render you uncapable of it: That to perſevere in any evil courſe, is the way to make you unhappy in this Life, and ſhall certainly

ly throw you into everlasting torments in the next. Of all this you must seriously perswade your self, and that not lightly and in general, deceiving your own Soul; but bringing it home to your particular concern in it; affecting your mind, and engaging your utmost endeavours to avoid that evil which is thus odious to God, and thus dangerous to your Everlasting Salvation.

The *second* step to this Duty, is, *To have a hearty sorrow and contrition for your sin.*

4. And this you must endeavour after, not by being *frighted* and *terrified*, and so upon that account *troubled*, as often as you reflect on those infinite evils your sins are like to bring upon you. There is no Man living so wicked, but would do the same; But, *Madam*, you must really sorrow that you have ever sinn'd; That you have provoked so loving and merciful a Father; That you have disobey'd so gracious a Redeemer, and all to gratifie your passions in some baser instance, which you ought to abhor upon these grounds alone, though there were no punishment awaiting your transgressions.

5. Nor must this *sorrow* and *contrition* be only for the grosser evils of our unregenerate estate, but even when we live best we must repeat it as often as we transgres the divine Command; nay, we should employ it too, even

even upon the *weakneſſes*, the *frailties*, the *pollutions* of our Natures: our very *proneneſs* and *inclination to ſin*: for however theſe (unconſented to) are no actual tranſgreſſions; yet are they matter of ſorrow and grief to every true Chriſtian, and therefore ought to be part of his *humiliation* alſo.

THE *third* Preparatory to this Duty, is *Confeſſion*.

6. AND this is ſo neceſſary to our pardon, that we have no promiſe of any forgiveneſs without it: To fulfil this you muſt not ſatisfie your ſelf to acknowledge to God Almighty in *general*, That you are a Sinner; but you muſt carefully remark, and particularly enumerate alſo, at leaſt the ſeveral *kinds* of ſin whereof you know your ſelf guilty: You muſt ſhew your ſenſe of them by *aggravating* them with all the unhappy circumſtances, and heightning accidents of them; and for the reſt, you muſt compriſe your unknown and leſſer ſins under ſome ſuch general confeſſion as that of the holy

David, Who can tell how oft he offendeth? O cleanſe thou me from my ſecret faults. Pſal. 19. 12.

7. You will, *Madam*, doubtleſs expect that I ſhould here add ſomewhat of another ſort of *Confeſſion*, which I have ſometimes had the honour to diſcourſe with you about; I then

then told you that unleſs ſome Accident rendred it ſo, I did not eſteem it *abſolutely neceſſary*. The expediency of it, I muſt confeſs, I ever much approved, and have often wiſh'd others would do ſo too; and the reaſons I have at large given you, may be ſummed up into theſe: 1. That St. *James* has adviſed us to *confeſs* our *faults one to another, Chap.* 5. 16. *and pray one for another.* 2. If we have injured another, then we ought to go and *confeſs* our fault to him, as ever we mean to obtain the forgiveneſs of God. 3. But if our ſin belongs only to him, yet to *confeſs* to his *Miniſter* is in ſome ſort a fuller ſatisfaction to his juſtice; It declares our greater deteſtation of that offence, for which we are content to commit this violence upon our ſelves. It gives us this comfort too, that thereby we get the opinion of our *Spiritual Guide* concerning the *ſtate* of our *Repentance*; and his direction and aſſiſtance for the perfecting of it; and if we deſire his particular abſolution, we muſt then make our Confeſſion to him, before we can obtain it. What force theſe Motives may have upon you, I cannot tell; but for the preſent you are paſſing into a place where you will have little opportunity to practiſe it, and ſhould therefore reſolve to ſupply it, by a more due and careful performance of it to God *Almighty*.

The *laſt* thing Preparatory to a true *Repentance*, is, *A firm reſolution and vow of a new life.*

8. That you will immediately quit all your *Sins*, and all the *occaſions* that are wont to lead you into thoſe ſins; That you will wholly reſign your ſelf up to the guidance of *Chriſt*; and perform whatſoever you know to be his *Will*; and this do truly and ſincerely all the days of your life.

9. And here, *Madam*, behold in ſhort the duties that are required of you: This is what you muſt do to inherit *eternal Life*; And if you have (as I make no doubt) already come up thus far, you are then firmly to perſevere in it unto the end; If you fulfil this *Reſolution*, though you * fall ſometimes by *infirmity*; * are betrayed by *Ignorance*, * or ſurprized by ſome *ſudden*, and *daily incurring temptations*; *Nay, though you ſhould be ſo unhappy as to fall into ſome greater *Act*, even of *deliberate ſin*, which you might have avoided, and which you preſently retract by Confeſſion and amendment, you are nevertheleſs in a *regenerate eſtate*, you live the Life of a Chriſtian here, and ſhall inherit the reward that is promiſed to him, in a glorious Immortality hereafter.

10. I Shall cloſe this with my earneſt deſires, which not any doubts of your goodneſs, but my real concern for your welfare,

extort from me; that you will ſeriouſly conſider your own ſtate as to this affair; Flatter not your ſelf, * neither a *tranſient ſorrow* that you have ſinned, * nor a *wiſh* that you had not, * neither a faint and general, *God be merciful to me a ſinner*; * nor an *imperfect reſolution* not to be ſo any longer; * not an obſerving for the reſt the *whole Law*, if you indulge your ſelf but in any one *habit* of ſin; * not praying to God to give you his *grace*, without your own ſincere endeavours of uſing it; nothing but a ſteady *reſolution* brought to practice; God's grace uſed, his Commandments obey'd as far as your infirmities will permit, and his pardon begg'd where you have not; This is that which alone muſt ſave your Soul, and carry you on to that glorious Immortality, which I beſeech him to give you for his Son *Jeſus Chriſt's ſake*.

CHAP. IV.

A Conſideration of ſome particular Duties which I would more eſpecially recommend to you.

I THOUGHT, *Madam*, here to have ended your trouble, and to have referr'd my ſelf for what may concern your farther practice, to thoſe excellent and uſeful *Treatiſes* you have ſo wiſely provided for that purpoſe; But they ſpeak in *general*, and though I know the care you take to apply them to your ſelf, yet

yet I cannot but beg leave to add two or three Conſiderations that may more immediately be accommodated to your particular circumſtances.

Firſt, That you duely implore the bleſſings of Heaven by your conſtant *Prayers* to God *Almighty*.

I NEED not tell you that you have * many wants to be ſupplied, * many bleſſings to receive, * many ſins to be forgiven, and that there is nothing can obtain all theſe for you, but your Prayers; or were you ſo All-ſufficient as not to need the influences of Providence to ſupport you, yet would ſure, every day bring to your remembrance ſlips and infirmities to be confeſs'd to him; to be ſure, bleſſings and mercies to be gratefully acknowledged, in a perpetual return of *praiſes* and *thankſgivings* to the great Donor. Upon all which accounts there can never be any pretence for your neglect of that duty, which ſo many continual engagements oblige you to.

2. LET me to this, add the great aſſiſtance it will afford you in the performance of all the reſt of your duty; whilſt thus you have your *converſation in Heaven*, all the little goods here below will ſeem poor and inconſiderable in your ſight; this will ſtrengthen your *patience* in Phil. 3. 20.

bearing your Calamities, whilſt with faith you contemplate the glorious end to which they lead; It will raiſe in your Soul the greateſt care of fulfilling the divine Will, leſt you loſe ſo excellent a reward; In a word; this exerciſe will call down the favour of Heaven upon you, either to remove thoſe afflictions you now labour under, from you, or you from them; will bring you peace, and comfort, and ſatisfaction in this life, and an everlaſting peace and repoſe in the next.

3. It has been the great diſcouragement of ſome Chriſtians in the exerciſe of this *duty*, that they do not find theſe great *Benefits* of their Devotion: That they are told indeed of the mighty influences of Prayer: and have read how that by it *Joſhua* changed the order of nature, and made the *Sun ſtand ſtill in the midſt of the Firmament*; *Elias* tied up the *Windows of Heaven* that it rained not *for three whole years in Iſrael*; *Hezekias* added *fifteen years to his life*; The *Apoſtles* gave *feet to the Lame*, *Eyes to the Blind*; and *even life to the Dead*; But themſelves are ſo far from working ſuch *miracles*, that they cannot ſo much as obtain the ſupply of thoſe ordinary wants they very often labour under.

Joſh. 10. 12. 1 Kings 17. 2 Kings 26.

4. But, *Madam*, we muſt not for all this think either that the Arm of the Lord is ſhortned, that he cannot, or his will alter'd that

that he ſhould not hear us, as well as he did them; indeed for ſuch miraculous effects, we have now no longer need of them, and it would therefore be a fond preſumption in us to expect them. But for the reſt there are two conſiderations which Men would do well to reflect on before they charge God fooliſhly;

1. Whether we do not very often receive the benefit of our Prayers, when yet ungratefully we charge Heaven with denying our Petitions?

2. If our Requeſts are really deny'd, whether the fault do's not lye at our own doors that they are ſo?

3. For the *former* of theſe we may very eaſily be miſtaken, and I doubt very often are ſo: Did we indeed perfectly know the ſtate of our own condition, and what was moſt proper and convenient for us, we might then have ſome reaſon to conclude, our Prayers were not heard, if our deſires were not anſwered: But now that ſuch is our ignorance, that though we are ſenſible enough of the evils that lie upon us, yet we cannot ſay either whether they are fit to be removed at all; or when, or by what means; or for what ſtate; we ought to be very wary in our thoughts of God's Providence, and not raſhly pronounce what we can never be ſure of.

6. Should you now, for inſtance, your ſelf, *Madam*, pray to God for a *Recovery*

very from this ſickneſs; how raſh would it be to accuſe God of not hearing your Prayers, becauſe you found your Diſeaſe to continue ſtill? * It may be he ſees it has not yet perfectly wrought in you all thoſe good effects he intends; That if you ſhould at this time recover your health, it might occaſion your return to the ſins and follies of your age. * It may be he intends yet longer to prove your Vertue, that ſo he may afterwards more plenteouſly reward it; * Perhaps he puniſhes your ſins by it in this Life, that he may ſpare you in the next. Now if theſe or the like are the cauſes of your affliction, certainly you could not have a greater injury done you, than the removing of your Diſtemper: and thoſe Prayers you make for a recovery are to be lookt upon as beſt heard by God, and beſt anſwer'd for you, if they move him to a longer continuance of your ſickneſs. Again, * Though God does not anſwer your requeſts in the very removal of your Diſtemper; it may be yet he ſhews their efficacy in ſupporting you with ſtrength and patience to bear it; Infinite are the methods of his Providence, and impoſſible it is for us to trace them all: and though we are not able to point out the very mercy which our devotion has obtained, yet this God has promiſed, and we muſt therefore firmly believe and rely upon it, *That if we ask, we ſhall, we do, receive.*

7. But

7. But here my other conſideration muſt come in, St. *James*, ſpeaking of the ineffectualneſs of ſome mens Devotion, tells them, *Ye ask, and receive not, becauſe ye ask amiſs*; and that I fear is too often our condition; And therefore that you may be able both to know and avoid this, I will beg leave, *Madam*, to give you only a ſhort Catalogue of what qualifications ſeem to me more immediately requiſite to render your devotion prevalent. James 4.5.

1. Take heed that the things you deſire be ſuch as are fit for God to give, and you to receive: Let not any inſtances of *ſin* defile your Requeſts; and even in the moſt innocent matters, rather beg in general the bleſſings of God which he knows requiſite, whether for your Soul or Body, than deſcend too much to the particulars your ſelf, and preſcribe to him, who ſo little underſtand your own wants.

Secondly, Before you *pray*, clear your Soul from all thoſe ſins which you know diſpleaſing to God Almighty; for till that be done, he regards you as his Enemy; and you cannot therefore expect that he ſhould reward you as his Servant.

Thirdly, Prepare your Soul with all thoſe neceſſary *Graces* that are more immediately requiſite to this performance: with *Humility* and *Reſignation*; with *Faith* in his Power, and *Hope* of his Mercy; with *Love* and *Charity*

Charity towards God and towards your Neighbour; All which will infinitely diſpoſe him to give, and prepare you to receive.

Fourthly, When you pray, let it be with *attention*, with *fervency*, with *perſeverance*; To which end I ſhould think it better that your Prayers were *ſhort* and *frequent*, than over long; which only make them tedious and uneaſie to you in your preſent ſtate, but never the more acceptable to God; who delights not in mens words, but requires their hearts; and hears the ſhorteſt *Ejaculation*, as certainly as the longeſt Prayer.

Fifthly, In a word: Having pray'd, leave the iſſue contentedly in his hands: Let it ſatisfie you that you have his promiſe for your ſecurity, and that if thus you make your requeſts to him, you ſhall ſooner or later moſt certainly find that *your labour has not been in vain, in the Lord.*

1 Cor. 15. 58.

A Second *Duty*, that I muſt more particularly recommend to you, is *Charity*:

A Grace that has more Promiſes annext to it than any other Moral or Theological Virtue; St. *Paul* prefers it even to *Faith* it ſelf, 1 *Cor.* 13. And could we have every other Virtue which the Goſpel enjoyns in the higheſt perfection, yet he plainly aſſures us

us that without this, they would all avail us nothing.

2. Charity taken in its largeſt extent is nothing elſe but, *The ſincere Love of God and our Neighbour*: The former of theſe requires not only your higheſt eſteem of him, your deſires of going to him, and filling your ſelf with his goodneſs: but alſo a ſincere endeavour to pleaſe and obey him, to fulfil his commands, and hate all thoſe things that he diſlikes, and may any way ſet you at enmity with him.

3. The latter engages you to an univerſal *love* of *all Men*, even your very Enemies: to retain no malice nor hatred againſt any; to be ready to do them all the kindneſs you are able, by reproving the Vicious, inſtructing the ignorant, relieving the poor; for all which, you have the peculiar promiſe of God for your engagement; and ſhall receive the pardon of your ſins, and everlaſting glory for your Reward.

I Must now haſten to a concluſion, and therefore will preſume to add only this one caution more,

Thirdly, That you would take an eſpecial care *how you employ your time.*

It is not, *Madam*, for me to divine what opportunities you may have for this, nor can I therefore adviſe you any thing in particular:

Only let me beg you to loſe no occaſion of doing all the good you can; which whatever the iſſue of your preſent ſickneſs be, is to be ſure your duty, and ſhall prove your bleſſing either in this World or another.

2. I Need not deſire you to ſpend the hours you may have for your friends and your diverſion innocently; but if I may preſume to ſpeak my thoughts in a matter of no great importance, I ſhould perſwade you not only to do this, but even to deny your ſelf ſomewhat of that full liberty which others do uſually allow themſelves; the Wiſe man has told us, that *Mirth is not proper in the time of ſorrow*; ſince it has pleaſed God to lay his inflictions upon you, You ought ſo far (I had almoſt ſaid in civility to him) to comply with your circumſtances, as to be a little more reſerved than otherwiſe were needful, and though not to fly to the other extreme (which, I rather ought to diſſwade you from) yet to keep in ſuch a temper, as may both ſpeak you ſenſible, as you ought, of your condition, and yet not diſcontented at God's diſpenſations.

3. But, *Madam*, whatever your employs be, let no day paſs without ſome time to retire into your ſelf, and either by reading, meditating, or ſome other pious exerciſe to feed your zeal, and confirm your devotion.

4. Lastly, in your moſt buſie Occupations, when you are never ſo much taken up with

with other affairs, yet steal now and then a minute to the *thoughts of Heaven*, send up an *Ejaculation* to the God of your Salvation; This is a piece of thrift that by frequent exercise will do you much good, and yet never injure any other business. *Augustus Cæsar* is highly commended by the ancient Poet, that in the midst of his most troublesome occupations he could still find time to look up to Heaven, and consider the frame, and contemplate the parts and motions of it. How much more should we always be at leisure to reflect on him that framed both that and us; to whose *Providence we owe* every minute of our lives, and whom therefore we ought, above all other things, incessantly to praise for his unspeakable Mercies.

CLOSE.

AND now, *Madam*, that I may close with what I begun, after so long an intrusion upon your Meditations, with these reflections, which I am confident make a great part of your daily entertainment; The only thing that can render either these Papers or their recommendations acceptable unto you; that can secure you against sin, and endear Vertue and Religion to your practice, will be to raise your affections above this World, by seriously considering the excellence and certainty of another life; and how vain and transient, indeed how troublesome and unsatisfying are the highest felicities of this.

2. I HAVE not here time to delineate to you the glories of God's heavenly Kingdom, nor indeed could I tell you (if I had) what the happiness of that place is likely to be, '*where all tears shall be wiped from our eyes*, '*and there shall be no more death*, *nor sorrow*, '*nor crying*, *nor pain*; When our Bodies shall be freed from every disease; our Souls from every trouble; those shall be chang'd into incorruptible and immortal substances, these be entertain'd with the most comfortable and ravishing

viſhing objects, and both continue to be thus unſpeakably happy thoughout all Eternity, without the leaſt danger of either loſing or leſſening their enjoyments.

3. Blessed *God*! How contrary is this to our melancholy and uncomfortable portion here below? a place, where not a day paſſes, but we eat our Bread with ſorrow and cares; The preſent troubles us, the future amazes us; and even the paſt fills us with grief and anguiſh. I forbear to mention the particular evils which every Man beſt knows by his own experience: If we look abroad upon the preſent face of the World, What do we ſee in the ſeveral Kingdoms about us, but Wars and confuſion, all things running to ruine, and deſtruction, to the confounding and devouring of each other. If we conſider the *Church*, that holy Mother of us all, how do her unnatural Children rend and tear her ſacred bowels by their contentions? What *Schiſms*, What *Hereſies*, what *Prophaneneſs* is there in it? Only in Sin and Impiety we agree on all ſides; here there is neither Jew nor Gentile; but all are united in a monſtrous confederacy againſt God and our own Souls.

4. If we contract our view, and confine it to our own ſinful Nation; It has pleaſed God to preſerve us yet in peace, to ſee if we will repent and anticipate his Judgments; But alas! his hand is liſted up to ſtrike, and we do nothing to prevent the blow: and

what can we expect but that it should at last fall upon us to our confusion?

5. Pardon me, *Madam*, if I freely confess to you my fears, that I tremble to think what shall be the issue of so great an Impenitence, as we have now these many years shew'd under all the various methods of God's Providence to reclaim us.

6. He has sent the sword, both of civil Troubles and publick War amongst us, and it has been deeply stain'd in the blood of the best and chiefest of our strength; Our *Princes have been forced into Captivity*; *Our Church been chased into the Wilderness*; *the breath of our Nostrils*, the *Anointed of the Lord has* been cut off by the vilest of his Subjects, yet have we not return'd, nor sought our God.

7. The *Fire* has consumed our dwellings, the *Plague* destroy'd its *Thousands and ten Thousands in our Streets*, yet behold we are still incorrigible, we go on as before in the ways of our own hearts, and speak peace to our Souls even in the midst of all these dangers.

8. Great certainly is our sin, and fatal, I fear, shall be the punishment of it, and what shall we do, (for, *Madam*, I must here beg leave to joyn my self in this reflection) to prevent our part in the common destruction? Let us take heed that we have no share in their sins, and then by God's mercy we shall have none in the punishment. Let us live

as

as thoſe who attend ſuch trials, and then he will either be pleaſed *to take us from the evil to come*, or *cover us with his hand in the midſt of it:* He will, to be ſure, with the danger, make a way for us to eſcape; and being paſt through this ſhort ſtorm, will bring us to that Port where we ſhall find *everlaſting Reſt*, and a *conſummated felicity*; 'Thoſe bleſſings, 'which neither Eye has ſeen, nor Ear heard, nor 'does it enter into the Heart of Man to conceive; 'but *which God has prepared for them* that *love* 'him: Among which bleſſed number that you may then be found, as it was the only intention of theſe reflections to prepare you, ſo ſhall it ever be the hearty Prayer of him who with all imaginable reſpect and ſincerity remains,

Madam,

Your moſt humble.

and moſt obedient

Servant,

W. W.

THE

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